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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic study of two mainstreamed, multicultural day care centers was conducted over a school year. Children's responses to formal and informal curricula dealing with aspects of human diversity such as race, ethnicity, gender, and exceptionality, were analyzed, as were children's interaction patterns. The data revealed that although both programs emphasized acceptance of individual differences, few planned activities dealt with race or cultural diversity. Activities were more appropriate for "human relations" education than "multicultural" education. The use of nonsexist language and materials and teachers' attempts to prevent gender stereotyping were found to have positive, though limited, effects. Children at both centers appeared to accept their mainstreamed peers, with cross-ability interactions improving over the year. (Author/HOD)

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IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION THAT IS MULTICULTURAL IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO DAY CARE PROGRAMS

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Abstract

An ethnographic case study of two mainstreamed, multicultural day care centers was conducted over a school year. Children's responses to formal and informal curricula dealing with aspects of human diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender and exceptionality) were analyzed, as were children's interaction patterns. This paper presents findings in formal and informal curricula. Although both programs emphasized acceptance of individual differences, few planned activities dealt with race or cultural diversity. Programs were seen as more consistent with a human relations approach, and not fully implementing education that is multicultural. The use of non-sexist language and materials and teachers' attempts to prevent gender stereotyping were found to have positive, though limited, effects. Children at both centers appeared to accept their mainstreamed peers, with cross-ability interactions improving over the year. Issues in early childhood applications of education that is multicultural are discussed.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION THAT IS MULTICULTURAL IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO DAY CARE PROGRAMS

A number of socially important values and perceptions, as well as behavioral roles, first become internalized and demonstrated by preschool children. Attitudes and interaction patterns related to race, gender, and developmental differences have life-long implications, and have, therefore, been the subject of research in various disciplines. The impact of mainstreaming children with special developmental needs in early childhood programs has also been the subject of research, which has often focused on peer interactions and issues involved for both mainstreamed and normally developing peers. This study builds upon the existing literature on preschool children's awareness of human diversity, and looks at what happened - in practice - in two day care programs which attempted to promote "education that is multicultural."

"Education that is multicultural" (EMC) is based on the assumption that "multicultural" used as an adjective modifies or restricts the meaning of education (Grant, 1978). By stating it in a more active form, this concept conveys a pervasiveness of "cultural inclusion" in all aspects of the educational environment, and in all subject matter and classroom experiences. EMC reflects not only a commitment to the representation and fair presentation of cultural issues, but also encompasses the related issues of gender, class, physical and mental ability/disability, and age. Education that is multicultural is intended to be applicable in <u>all</u> classrooms, and not limited to obviously "multicultural groups."

In applying the principles of EMC to early childhood programs, several issues become evident. The first concerns children's lack of "developmental readiness" or cognitive capacity to deal with important cultural content. Arguments against presenting complex cultural information with preschool children include the contention that the pre-operational child's egocentrism and relative lack of comprehension of concepts of time, distance and symbolism make it difficult to avoid superficial or stereotypic conceptions. It can also be argued, however, that to assume that early childhood curricula need not reflect or incorporate the diversity of cultural, gender, or ability/disability issues, is to shirk from the responsibility of finding age-appropriate ways to do so.

The purpose of this case study was to describe and analyze children's responses to both formal and informal curricular activities dealing with aspects of human diversity such as race, ethnicity, gender, exceptionality, and individual differences. Additionally, this study sought to describe the daily interactions among preschool children in mainstreamed and pluralistic settings, focusing on patterns of cross-race, cross-gender, or cross-ability interactions which emerged (e.g., friendship or peer preference patterns, roles in play, attitudinal statements, and types of activities chosen). This paper focuses upon the formal and informal curricula dealing with human diversity, and its perceived impact on children.

There is much evidence that young children, by the age of three in most studies, are aware of color and racial differences (Crooks, 1970; Goodman, 1964; Johnson, 1977; Jones, 1972; Porter, 1971), as well as gender

differences (Foot, Chapman & Smith, 1980; Van Parys, 1981; Watson & Fisher, 1980). At about this age, children also begin to obtain "gender constancy," or the knowledge of gender as a stable characteristic of themselves and, somewhat later, of others (Pickhardt, 1983; Slaby & Frey, 1975; Thompson, 1975). Several studies have sited evidence that young children can identify others racially before they can provide self-identification (Corenblum & Wilson, 1982; Hunsberger, 1978).

A related issue concerns the development of racial attitudes. There is evidence that by age four color becomes affectively laden, though the child lacks a highly developed understanding of race; this has been found even earlier in black children (Crooks, 1970; Porter, 1971). Hirshfeld (1984) states that there is little support for the argument that racial awareness actually precedes the development of racial attitudes, and, in fact, that the inverse relation may be more accurate. As Katz (1976: 127, 148) states:

> An important difference between the acquisitions of race concepts and other person concepts is that evaluative components may be more intrinsically involved in early learning with regard to race. Although most theorists suggest that racial awareness precedes evaluation by several years, evidence pertinent to preschool children does NOT support this. Few children who are aware of racial cues exhibit such awareness with neutrality.

An important, related issue concerns racial identification. The major trends in this research seem to be the following:

(1) Racial identification develops similarly to gender identification, with girls tending to use gender for identification more than race (Adair & Savage, 1974; Van Parys, 1981).

(2) Preschool programs emphasizing positive integrated contact can be important in the development of positive self-concept and racial identity, particularly among black children (Crooks, 1970; Horton, 1973; Kirn, 1973).

Turning to roles, Van Parys (1981) found that children as young as three were able to use the roles of gender, age, and race to classify themselves and others, with older children demonstrating the ability to use more than one role at a time. These findings are relevant to the present study, in that they consider a variety of socio-cultural roles, which children learn and employ as young as three years of age. Moving from a structured interview and controlled assessment of role knowledge and use (as employed by Van Parys), to an ethnographic approach seems a logical progression. In other words, it is important to build on the evidence that children are aware of and using several roles, and begin to assess how these roles are manifesting in typical experiences and interactions in the preschool child's day.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Ethnographic Case Study Approaches to Observational Study

This study employed an ethnographic case study approach. Spindler (1982: 2) defines the "ethnography of schooling" as documentation of "educational and enculturative processes that are related to schools and intentional schooling, which leaves room for studies of playgrounds, peer groups, play groups, and other aspects of school-related life." Among the advantages of employing ethnographic techniques when considering issues of race, gender and mainstreaming in educational settings are the richness and depth of observation possible, the ability of a participant-observer to test out potential patterns as they emerge, and to generate potential hypotheses of observed patterns. Metz (1983: 391) states that ethnography's "capacity to explore subcultural assumptions, unarticulated regularities in interaction, non-verbal communication, and the development

of relationships through time all set it apart from quantitative or survey research methods."

Settings

The settings, and their "ecology", become the "subjects" in an ethnography. The group patterns - friendships, work- and play-mates, seating patterns, favorite activities, and diversity of children - are all the subject of observation and analysis. Thus, the children and their teachers will be described in the context of their settings.

The settings were two day care centers, located in an urban midwestern community. The study focused on the older groups of children at both "Center A" and "Center B", during most observations. These children ranged in age from 3.9 to 5.5 years of age (in September, 1984). Both day care centers offer full day programs, and are mainstreamed with children who have developmental disabilities and delays.

Center A

During the period of study, approximately 25% of the children enrolled were from countries other than the U.S., and most of these children were learning English as a second language, or were bilingual. Approximately 6% of the children were U.S. minority children and the remainder were EuroAmerican.

Center A had two mainstreamed children during the period of the case study. Marita had Downs syndrome, and Umaru was considered "autistic-like and hyperactive," with language and social delays. These children took part in most of the regular activities at the center, and had a special resource teacher working with them most of the time they were at the center.

Center A had 43 children enrolled during most of the school year; at the beginning of the study there were 22 boys and 21 girls. The ages of children range from two through six years-of-age. As stated earlier, this study focused on the older children, 3.9 - 5.5 years old. The children at Center A were grouped by age into five small groups.

Three teachers worked with the older children during the school year. Joan, the most experienced teacher at Center A, worked with the oldest group. Martin worked with the younger four-year-old group at the beginning of the study, and Kate began working with this group in November. At the beginning of the study, there were two male staff; in March, a third male teacher was hired to work primarily with the toddlers.

Center B

Center B is a mainstreamed, full-day program, located in a larger research and rehabilitation facility. At Center B, approximately 40% of the children enrolled in the overall program have a developmental disability or delay. Thus, the staff make-up at this center includes a number of special education (EC/EEN) teachers, as well as support staff and trainees.

This study focused on the room with the oldest children. At the beginning of the school year this classroom had fourteen 4- and 5-year-old children; 10 boys and 4 girls for the first two months of the study. This changed to 9 boys and 5 girls in November. There were four children in this room with special needs. One child had cerebral palsy, another had brain damage-related developmental delays and began the school year with very little speech, one child has some large motor delays and was considered "socially constricted", and one child received speech therapy.

In this class, there were two children from countries other than the U.S.; the other children were Euro-American and Eastern-European in heritage.

Two staff were the regular team teachers in this classroom. One Co-Lead Teacher was trained in early childhood exceptional educational needs, and the other was an experienced preschool teacher. A research assistant working on a microcomputer project was the only male staff member in this classroom on a regular basis.

Research Design

The major activity of the researcher, from September, 1984 through May, 1985, was to engage in classroom and playground observations of children and their teachers in Center A and Center B. Weekly observations lasted between 2 - 3 hours, and focused initially upon: (1) peer interactions and conversations, and (2) teacher-child interactions and discussions, primarily in teacher-guided curricular activities taking place during small and large group times. Observations at Center A were divided between the two "oldest" groups of 6-8 children. These groups were observed in all the activity areas (e.g., small manipulative, dramatic play, large blocks, arts, "soft room", science, and woodworking).

The study was not intended to be a comparison of Center A and Center B. Rather, the use of two different programs was intended to look at education that is multicultural in both ethnicially diverse and relatively monocultural settings. Since EMC is by not limited to pluralistic populations, Center B's inclusion provided an important opportunity to examine the ways in which a less pluralistic center sought to reflect diversity.

Observation Methods

This study employed a series of repeated observations (narrative, "scan and focus" type) at both centers, during various parts of the programs' schedules. These included free choice activity times, snacks, teacher-guided small and large groups, outside/playground times, field trips, and transitions. In the case of planned, small group activities, a direct transcription of the dialogue was made, along with noting seating patterns and relevant events which happened in the environment.

Field notes were discussed with teachers immediately following most observations, to clarify what was observed, and add additional background information. As data was analyzed and categories emerged, observations were made of these categories, and data was coded. All field notes were analyzed in terms of the two major questions guiding the study, and coded accordingly.

Reliability Measures

A number of steps were taken to insure, to the degree possible in an ethnography, the reliability of the findings. Measures included a comparison of the researcher's observations with perceptions of teachers involved in a particular activity or interaction. Following the data collection period, sections of the Results chapters were shared with the teachers. Since names had been changed in this write-up, teachers were asked to identify the children described, and give feedback to the researcher on the analysis. Additional interpretations of sample observations were done by a more "neutral" person, knowledgeable in child development.

RESULTS

Children's Responses to Formal Curricular Activities Dealing With Human Diversity

This section summarizes the types of formal, teacher-planned activities observed which dealt with aspects of human diversity, and describes children's responses to such activities.

Center A

At Center A, most planned activities consisted of a small group discussion of a particular topic (e.g., individual differences in appearance, gender-related issues, or handicaps), which was followed by related activities. The observations described in this section occurred primarily during "project time." Activities dealing directly with human diversity were observed during 7 out of 18 observations of Joan's group (oldest children) at project time, and during 5 out of 18 observations of Martin, and later Kate's group.

Throughout the school year the most frequent concept of human diversity discussed was individual differences, which included themes such as "all about me," family diversity, emotions, and differences in appearance. Next in frequency were gender-related discussions (e.g., discussions of anatomical differences, career options, roles, and community helpers), and planned activities dealing with "special needs," particularly handicaps. Few activities (3 out of 36 small groups observed) dealt directly with racial, ethnic or cultural diversity. These activities related to holidays, and differences in skin color and language.

With the older group, ages 4-5 years, Joan (the teacher) often employed a guided discussion technique in which differences within her small group were highlighted and discussed. For example, she encouraged

children to consider other viewpoints, family styles, likes and dislikes, and varying abilities. Joan also utilized photographs, books, puppets, and anecdotes from her own experiences to illustrate concepts being discussed. Within Joan's group, children's responses to these activities were generally positive; children spoke up, asked questions, and shared personal experiences with the group.

Although only three planned activities were observed throughout the school year which dealt directly with race or ethnicity, the discussion during several planned activities did include racial, linguistic, or religious differences. Although formal activities for these topics were rarely planned, teachers observed seemed willing to discuss them with the children.

Joan, in particular, incorporated discussions of racial and ethnic diversity into other planned activities dealing with human diversity. An example of one way in which a discussion of racial differences was incorporated into an activity focusing on family diversity follows. Joan was showing photographs of various families, and commenting on various individual and family differences.

> Joan, "People have many different body shapes, hair colors, and family sizes. Is everyone in a family the same color?"
> Answers were mixed, with about half of the children saying "yes,", and half saying "no."
> Joan showed a picture of a large family, with a Caucasian dad and a Black mom, and stated, "Family members frequently have different shades or colors of skin." As she said this, Marissa, who is bi-racial, smiled and nodded her head ("yes"). Joan pursued this, saying to Marissa, "Your dad has dark skin, and..."
> Marissa, "Black!"
> Joan, "And your mom has..."
> Marissa, "Tan skin."
> Joan, "And you and your sister have..."
> Marissa, "Tan skin - but darker than mom's."
> Tomas, "Everyone in my family has the same!"

Brandon, "Well, your dad has darker skin, 'cause he's from Puerto Rico!"
Tomas, "You're right! In fact, my aunt has dark skin, but my grandma has lighter skin..."

This notion of differences in skin tone carried over to the related activity, in which children drew "family portraits." Both Marissa and Tomas, as well as Carlitos, used different shades of crayons to depict the diversity of skin colors within their families.

Out of 36 planned small group activities observed, a total of 5 dealt directly with gender-related issues, and most appeared to be intended to combat sex-role stereotyping. The majority of instruction about gender equity occurred spontaneously, and was considered part of the informal curriculum at Center A.

Both Kate and Martin planned several activities dealing with gender stereotyping, and encouraging children to think of boys and girls in equal terms; four of these activities were observed. Since Martin initially worked with younger children, some of whom were still struggling with "gender constancy," he began on a basic level of anatomical differences. Later, when Kate began working with this group, she planned discussions of career opportunities or community helpers, which offered more discussion of sex-role expectations.

An example of a planned activity dealing with gender, which involved the younger children, was led by Kate during the spring. One purpose of this activity was to assess children's sex-role perspectives, both in terms of their own families, and in terms of career preference. Common responses to Kate asking the children what their moms and dads did were "cook," "be a student," "go to the office," and "feed the baby." It was

interesting to note that children attributed these roles equally to moms and dads, particularly in the area of domestic roles. When the discussion turned to what the children wanted to be when they grew up, several things were of interest. These included the children's attempts to state career titles in non-sexist terms, three children selecting "non-traditional" careers, and the degree to which children appeared to be drawing from real-life examples of people doing these jobs (e.g., one girl naming "plumber" as a career choice after a female plumber had been working at Center A).

In comparing children's responses to activities dealing with gender early to those in late spring, it appeared that children used non-sexist terms and took on "non-traditional" roles with increasing frequency. For example, in the fall semester, two boys frequently made statements beginning with the phrase, "girls can't be ____"; by winter, they seemed more open to considering girls and women in a variety of roles.

Special needs, sign language, and a variety of developmental differences were also the subjects of several planned activities at Center A. Five activities were observed which dealt with various handicaps, and ways in which children with disabilities were both like other children, and in need of special things to help them be more independent. Teachers frequently used a set of puppets which showed both racial/ethnic diversity, and several handicaps. Staff also borrowed a set of "count me in" puppets, which were toddler-sized, and included more realistic props. A variety of books showing children with handicaps participating in a variety of activities were also used during small and large groups.

The three teachers observed at Center A were careful not to use sexist terms or make stereotypic statements in the areas of race, gender, exceptionality, or other aspects of human diversity. When children used biased or stereotypic language, teachers often restated what the child had said. None of the teachers observed avoided issues such as sexuality, family change, or racial differences. A straightforward approach was usually observed, with children getting accurate, yet age-appropriate answers to their questions. Activities typically built upon children's prior experiences, and utilized a variety of props, including photographs, puppets, records, and books. Most of these activities could be identified as dealing with "individual differences."

In conclusion, children's responses to these activities varied. Children in both groups were observed to use less stereotypic language and be more open to a variety of roles by later in the school year. The older children (in Joan's group) appeared to grasp most of the concepts of human diversity discussed. Children seemed to respond best to the topics which were most clearly linked to their own experiences. For example, the activities which dealt with "all about me" were generally enthusiastically received. Children seemed interested in each others' work during such activities, as well as in talking, drawing, and "dictating" stories about themselves and their families. The other two activity topics which appeared to be quite successful with the children were (1) accepting people with handicaps, and (2) respecting gender equality.

Center B

This section describes the responses of children at Center B to planned activities presented primarily during large group and choice times;

small group observations which dealt with relevant content are also included. Activities dealing directly with human diversity (i.e., addressing race, gender, exceptionality, and individual differences) were observed during 16 out of 28 visits to Center A. The strongest "theme" of both planned and spontaneous activities was individual differences, particularly the acceptance and appreciation of children with handicaps. Gender equality was the other area which was regularly incorporated into both formal and informal activities.

The classroom observed at Center B utilized themes, around which one to two week units were planned. Themes which were related to the aspects of human diversity were "Free to Be Me," "Families," and a variety of units on community resources and helpers which were used, in part, to combat gender stereotyping. Examples of such units were firefighters, veterinarian, hospital (which included a visit from a male nurse), safety (which included a visit from a female police officer), and infant nursery, which encouraged boys to take on nurturing roles in dramatic play.

While the majority of planned activities dealing with diversity addressed individual differences, exceptionality, and gender-related topics, very few planned activities dealt with racial, ethnic or cultural diversity. These activities were generally "subsumed" under individual differences activities. For example, children discussed characteristics of puppets, or discussed their own skin, hair, and eye colors during an activity such as making "personal color wheels." Since Center B had a policy of not celebrating any religious-based holidays in the classroom, no formal activities dealt with this aspect of cultural diversity. The other aspect of cultural diversity which was represented in this classroom was

linguistic diversity. Two children in the classroom observed were bilingual (one in Spanish and the other in French).

Probably the most relevant unit to the focus of human diversity was the two week unit "Free to Be Me." During this unit, a variety of topics relating to race, gender, handicaps, and particularly to individual differences, were introduced. The teachers used a variety of teaching tools, including the individual differences puppets, body tracings with "things I like" collages, and discussions related to skin, eye, and hair color. When using the individual differences puppets with the children, as described above, Sara taught the children about skin and hair color, using terms such as "melanin" and "carotin."

The following dialogue, taken from Sara's introduction of the puppets and her "people packages" activity demonstrates the way in which children discussed skin color.

> Sara, "Boxes do come in lots of colors - just like people. Everyone's skin color is different..."
> Children continued, "Brown, black... and white."
> Peter, "Like my book on skin - there's even yellow skin, and also bones and muscle under it."
> Sara, "Our skin color is made by melanin - can everybody say 'melanin'? (Children repeated the word.) Now, can everyone put their hands in the middle of our circle, so we can look to see how much melanin is in each of our skin?"
> (Children stretched their hands out, and compared skin tones.) Responses included, "I have lots of melanin in my skin!" "I don't have so much," and, "Do we have about the same amount?". Sara and Andrea made sure that every child had an opportunity to compare skin tones with other children.
> Daniel, pointing to a freckle, said, "I must have lots of melanin here!" Sara said he was right and explained freckles to the group.

This discussion of the physical reason for different skin tones was reinforced during several planned activities during the "free to be me" unit. Particularly when children were completing their "personal color

wheels." It was particularly interesting to note how the children helped each other select the "appropriate" crayons for coloring in their eyes, hair, and skin tones. Two children, Peter and Elizabeth included the word "melanin" in these discussions. Children also looked intently in the mirror and carefully selected the "right" tones. For example, Josh spent several minutes selecting just the right shades of "tan and pink" to color in his lips on the color wheel.

Several planned activities were observed which dealt with accepting others with special needs. During the unit on "free to be me," for example, several activities included learning about handicaps. For example, as part of the body-tracing collages, which included "things I like," Susan brought in her "two-year-old braces." She passed her old braces around, and children opened and closed the velcro fasteners. During this discussion, Andrea called the children's attention to the photo essay which Susan and her mother had made, entitled, "How My Braces Are Made." This was displayed on poster board near the large group area and consisted of photographs of all the steps involved in fitting Susan for her new braces, as well as how they were made.

Children's Responses to Informal Curricular Activities Dealing With Human Diversity

"Informal activities" include a variety of unplanned, spontaneous conversations and activities, initiated by both children and teachers. Included in "children's responses" were children's conversations concerning aspects of human diversity, spontaneous activities with teachers and peers, and children's role-plays. The discussions of Center A and Center B consider the "themes" and patterns in such informal curricula, and how the

types of diversity focused on in the study were incorporated into such activities.

Center A

Field notes from Center A captured children's discussions of human diversity, ranging from discussions of individual differences, likes and dislikes, to relatively complex discussions of different families, religions, and even politics. A frequently observed theme of informal discussions led by teachers was cooperation and non-competitive activities. Teachers at Center A were frequently observed to "set the stage" for a discussion of diversity by pointing out the different ways in which children had used the same media (e.g., in an art activity, with the blocks, or small manipulatives). Teacher statements encouraging a non-competitive attitude included, "Remember - everyone's a winner here! Do your best, that's what counts." Children were encouraged to cheer for each other, not to worry about differences in speed, ability, or style, and to have the experience of "being a winner."

Both of these consistent themes - pointing out different ways children used the same media, and the encouragement of a non-competitive attitude, were viewed as reinforcing children's respect for individual differences.

In terms of racial and ethnic diversity, children appeared to be interested in knowing what their bilingual peers were saying in their native languages. On three occasions, children were observed discussing what languages were spoken by their parents. Languages spoken at home included Turkish, German, French, and Hausa. On at least eight occasions during observations, children tried to learn words from another language -

most frequently Spanish. Tomas and Carlitos appeared to be pleased when their peers understood or tried to speak Spanish.

Group times often began with having the children count aloud, and select the languages they wished to count in. Some of the records and tapes used with the children at large and small group times were bilingual (typically in Spanish). Written language around the center (e.g., on bulletin board displays and decorations in the center) also reflected linguistic diversity. Colors, shapes and several other labels were displayed in a number of languages. During only two observations, however, were teachers or children observed using these display materials directly.

Children's conversations about human diversity also included discussions of holidays celebrated. In December, for example, both Christmas and Hanukkah were discussed by the children and staff - with the emphasis on Christmas. Jewish holidays were also discussed, and parents of two children from Israel came into Center A to discuss their holiday celebrations, and do related cooking and art projects.

A variety of informal interactions and conversations dealing with gender were observed at Center A. These instances can be grouped into the following categories: spontaneous discussions involving non-sexist terms and concepts, cross-gender cooperative play, and gender segregated activity. The teachers at Center A made a variety of attempts to role-model and create a non-sexist environment. Beyond the gender-balanced staff, non-sexist language was consistently used by the staff, and actively encouraged in children's speech. For example, teachers used non-sexist terms for community helpers, including "firefighters," "police officers," and "mailcarriers."

A number of children began to use the term "person" in reference to a variety of jobs. It was also of interest to note how children struggled with the appropriate terms during dramatic play. For example, the following conversation took place in the small manipulatives room, between a boy and a girl who were engaging in "airport" dramatic play.

Carlitos, "I'm the big control man."
Marissa, "Can I have a turn doing that?"
Carlitos, "OK. You're the control tower person."
Marissa, "No! I'm the control GIRL."
Carlitos, "And next I'll be the control BOY!"

Another area in which children discussed gender issues concerned values about "what a boy can do" and "what a girl can do." For example, when a child made the statement, "Girls don't play many sports," Sarah was quick to say, "Sure they do!". On another occasion, Tomas made a statement which implied that only men could fix things, and Alison responded, "Well, my mom fixes lots of things at our house."

Other times, adults provided alternative "evidence" to sexist assumptions. For example, when a couple of boys were commenting that "women can't carry heavy stuff," Margaret, the cook, pointed out all the heavy things she carried into the kitchen (e.g., large boxes filled with cans). Teachers at Center A utilized a variety of other "teachable moments" or spontaneous situations. From teachers making sure that children noticed or interacted with "Maggie the plumber," who was working on the hot water heater, pointing out that the "milkman" was now a woman, to a visit from a male nurse, children were frequently presented with examples of both men and women in a variety of roles and doing many kinds of jobs.

In the area of informal curriculum dealing with exceptionality, a variety of conversations and "teachable moments" occurred in the children's day-to-day interactions with their mainstreamed peers, Marita and Umaru. A number of these informal learning experiences were facilitated by resource teachers working with Marita and Umaru, or by Joan, Martin or Kate. Often these conversations were in response to questions or concerns which children raised regarding their peers with special needs. An obvious attempt was made to answer children's questions in a forthright way, and to demonstrate the things that Marita could do.

Sign language was used at different parts of the day. Several of the teachers used sign language while leading large group activities. Sign language was also included during small group times and snack. This instruction appeared to be spontaneous, rather than planned. The resource teachers working one-to-one with Marita also role-modeled a great deal of sign language, since Marita was non-verbal and encouraged to sign.

Center B

At Center B there were also many instances of informal learning experiences related to human diversity. For the most part, children in the room observed were quite verbal, imaginative, and incorpirated dramatic play (including role assignment) into a variety of different activities. Individual differences were discussed informally during most observations made at Center B. The themes of such discussions included attempts to understand the special needs and communication tools of mainstreamed peers (e.g., learning sign language to use with Jimmy, or understanding Susan's need for leg braces). Another informal curriculum theme which was observed dealt with differences in emotions (e.g., likes and dislikes), and the

encouragement of children to express their feelings, and solve their own problems by considering the individual differences involved.

Out of 28 visits made to Center B, informal activities or discussions dealing with either racial or ethnic diversity were observed on 5 occasions. In terms of other informal curriculum dealing with these aspects of human diversity, the teachers appeared to attempt to look for pluralism in the materials used with the children. Teacher-made materials, for the most part, also showed an effort to depict racial diversity. Photographs and posters of children from a variety of racial background hung on the walls, and books showed several children of color, as well as many children with a variety of individual differences. Teachers commented on several occasions that they were concerned about authenticity, and did not wish to leave the children with unnecessary stereotypes by attempting to teach about other cultures than those represented in the classroom.

In terms of spontaneous activities and conversations directly related to gender, it was apparent that the teachers attempted to select themes and dramatic play set-ups which would encourage cross-gender cooperation, and role-playing of a variety of roles. For example, when the dramatic play area was set up as an infant nursery, several of the boys in the room selected this as their first choice during free play. The dramatic play in the nursery included much care-taking behavior, with most boys role-playing being parents.

Other roles which boys took on included cooking and waiting on tables in a restaurant dramatic play set-up, role-playing being a nurse, in addition to being doctors, in a hospital set-up, and being a receptionist at the "fire station." It was particularly interesting to hear children

discussing which roles they "could" and "could not" take on, according to gender. For example, there were discussions about whether a boy could ever be a nurse, in which Rob reminded other children of a male nurse who was a father of a child in another classroom at Center B, and who had visited their classroom.

Teachers consistently used non-sexist language, and attempted to select materials which they felt were not gender-biased or stereotypic. They also seemed to be aware of a variety of "teachable moments," in which gender equity could be reinforced. Although the only adult male regularly in this classroom was parttime research assistant, who worked with pairs of children at the computer, children were exposed to several people in non-traditional job roles. These people included a male nurse, at least one female police officer, and several fathers, seen by the children in primary care-giving roles with their children at the center.

It was particularly interesting to observe children's attempts to use non-sexist language during free play situations, such as the blocks area and in dramatic play. The following examples come from observations during dramatic play.

The first example took place as children played in the dramatic play area, which was set up as a fire station. Jenny, who might be described as on the "shy side," and quite teacher-oriented, and Rob were switching roles between the office job (taking emergency calls) and the firefighter role. One child would answer calls for a few minutes, then the other child would take over for a short time.

Diego entered and said, "I'm the fire <u>chief</u>, OK?"
Rob, "No!"

Diego, "Then, how can I play?"
The three children then proceeded to discuss the roles of the fire chief. After a few minutes, Jenny said, "I guess I'm the fire chief girl!"

A follow-up observation to this conversation took place after the group had taken a field trip to a fire station nearby, in which there were no female firefighters working. Following this field trip, Jenny stated, "I can't be the fire chief, 'cause girls can't be firefighters - I didn't see any at the Fire Station!." This experience demonstrated the power of children's real-life observations, even against a background of carefully selected non-sexist materials and generally well planned community experiences.

On another occasion, in which dramatic play was set up as a restaurant, three children began discussing the "proper names" for their chosen roles.

Diego, "Well, Ruth what do you want to be - a waiter or a waitress?"
Ruth, "A chef!"
Diego, "No, girls can't be Chefs!"
Peter, "Yes - girls can be chefs, but they're called 'Cheffas'!"

Since Center B's program emphasized mainstreaming and acceptance of developmental differences, a variety of informal activities dealing with exceptionality were observed. Similarly to those dealing broadly with individual differences, many of the informal activities dealing with handicaps occurred during units such as "Free to Be Me," "Care Bears," and community helpers - particularly those related to health. The other unit in which many discussions of handicaps occurred was a two week unit in the spring semester on "the body."

One of the most consistently incorporated areas of informal curriculum at Center B was the on-going instruction of many children in sign language. Early in the school year, sign language instruction was observed primarily on a one-to-one basis, between a special needs teacher and Jimmy. Jimmy resisted being singled out - particularly when this instruction was done outside the regular classroom. It seemed obvious why Jimmy would sometimes resent having to leave the room for tutoring sessions. For example, Jimmy was observed leaving the room during special activities, or re-entering the room after the choices for the morning had been explained to the large group.

By late in the first semester, more attempts were made to incorporate sign language instruction into more aspects of the program, and involve more children with Jimmy. This was accomplished both by having one or two children go with Jimmy for tutorial sessions with his speech therapists, and by incorporating more of Jimmy's speech therapy and sign language instruction into social times in the classroom (e.g., at snack and lunch times). By second semester, signing had become virtually a "status symbol" in the room. In fact, when children were asked what they most liked to do with Jimmy, most of them answered, "learn sign language from him!".

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While both centers observed did a variety of things to discourage sex-role stereotyping and encourage children's acceptance of mainstreamed peers, very few planned activities related directly to cultural or racial diversity were seen. Activities implemented better fit Grant and Sleeter's (1984) typology of "human relations" than "education that is multicultural." Reasons given by teachers for omission of "cultural

content" included attempting to be age-appropriate, authentic, and also the lack of time to develop appropriate activities. Both centers were viewed as emphasizing acceptance of individual differences and enhancing self esteem.

Although critical analysis of forms of societal opporession may not be age-appropriate early childhood content, several aspects of EMC do seem applicable to day care settings. First is the notion that EMC is for all programs, and not a "minorities" only approach to curricula. Secondly, the attempt to change the structure of the school setting, such as Center A's goal of having both a gender- and racially-balanced staff, was seen as applicable in early childhood programs. Thirdly, as previously discussed, education that is multicultural includes gender, class and handicap in its vision of pluralistic education.

There are several ways of interpreting the relative lack of planned activities dealing with race or cultural diversity. One argument contends that care must be taken to avoid stereotyping, and that many "ethnic activities" may take on a superficial tone. This argument would lend support to teachers' statements that parent involvement was the optimal way to provide authentic, participatory experiences.

An equally strong argument, however, could be formulated, based on the observational data from Center A, that most of the four- and five-year-old children already had at least a basic understanding of many of the requisite concepts to an understanding of cultural diversity. Discussions providing evidence of children's interest in human diversity were often child-initiated and incorporated into children's dramatic play conversations.

Another argument for why relatively few activities dealing directly with cultural diveristy were planned was captured by a teacher who said, "There are lots of things I'd like to try... it I had the time!". The fact that the settings studied were day care centers, in which staff worked long hours with relatively low wages and a variety of expectations, should not be overlooked completely. This finding could also be consistent with Grant & Sleeter's (1984: 27) statement, "Most teachers do little to teach multiculturally, no matter what their attitudes are."

In terms of pervasiveness, gender-related issues and individual differences activities, including several dealing with handicaps, appeared to the the strongest areas of both formal and informal curricula. Sociometric data from interviews with children, as well as behavioral evidence, showed high rates of acceptance of mainstreamed peers at both centers, with evidence of valuing and friendship with mainstreamed peers at Center B. Teachers modelled enjoyment of interactions with special needs children, answered children's questions openly, and encouraged children with disabilities to act as teachers (e.g., of sign language) with their peers. The valuing and appreciation of all children by teachers set an inclusive and accepting context, in which children could learn similar attitudes.

In conclusion, whether or not a "pure" interpretation of education that is multicultural is possible in early childhood settings, the two programs observed did appear to create milieus in which a number of aspects of human diversity were openly acknowledged. In other ways the stereotypes prevailed - particularly in the area of gender in free play situations. Perhaps the most promising patterns were the positive interactions between

mainstreamed children and their peers. Most discouraging was the relative omission of planned activities dealing with race, ethnic or cultural content. Teachers did, however, appear to be grappling with issues of authenticity and age-appropriateness, and were aware that they could "do much more" in these areas.

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